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A CONTINGENT OF COSMIC ENTITIES CHALLENGES THANOS'S MIGHT. SUCH A CONFLICT MAY WELL PROVE MORE THAN THIS FRAGILE REALITY CAN BEAR.

# ASTRAL CONFLAGRATION

THANOS OF TITAN...WE CALL UPON YOU TO SURRENDER THE INFINITY GEMS.

HONOR THIS REQUEST OR FACE POWER BEYOND YOUR WILDEST DREAMS.

I BELIEVE YOU WILL DISCOVER THE HORIZONS OF MY IMAGININGS FAR WIDER THAN YOU WOULD SUSPECT, LORD CHAOS.

YOU ADDRESS OMNIPOTENCE.

TREAD CAREFULLY.

JIM STARLIN WRITER | RON LIM PENCILS | JOSEF RUBINSTEIN INKS | LAUGHLIN & SCHEELE COLORS JACK MORELLI LETTERS | CRAIG ANDERSON EDITOR TOM DEFALCO CHIEF

THAT WHICH YOU CHALLENGE IS BEYOND EVEN YOUR MYSTIC UNDERSTANDING.
BEGONE, FOOLISH GODLINGS, OR SUFFER MY CELESTIAL WRATH.
I FANCY YOUR BROTHER IS ABOUT TO PUT ON QUITE A SHOW FOR US, YOUNG EROS!
WITH SUCH GRAND FORCES ALIGNED AGAINST HIM, THANOS WILL UNLEASH THE FULL FURY OF HIS POWER.
STILL, THE OUTCOME OF THIS BATTLE YET REMAINS UNCERTAIN.
THERE'LL BE NO TIME TO WORRY ABOUT OR ENERGY TO BE WASTED ON NON-ESSENTIAL PRIORITIES.
SUCH AS THIS MONUMENT OR RELATIVES.
I DOUBT YOU'LL LAST MORE THAN A FEW MICRO-SECONDS INTO THE CONFLICT.
BUT IT SHOULD BE A QUICK DEATH.
OF COURSE, LORD THANOS HAS THE POWER TO REBUILD HIS LOVE MONUMENT AFTERWARDS.
HE'LL MAKE IT AS GOOD AS NEW.
PERHAPS HE'LL DO THE SAME FOR YOU.
JUST LOOK AT THE MARVELOUS JOB HE DID ON NEBULA.

WHILE HALF A GALAXY AWAY...

...AND EARTH IS FALLING INTO ANOTHER ICE AGE.

WHAT TRANSPIRES ON YOUR FRONT, WARLOCK?

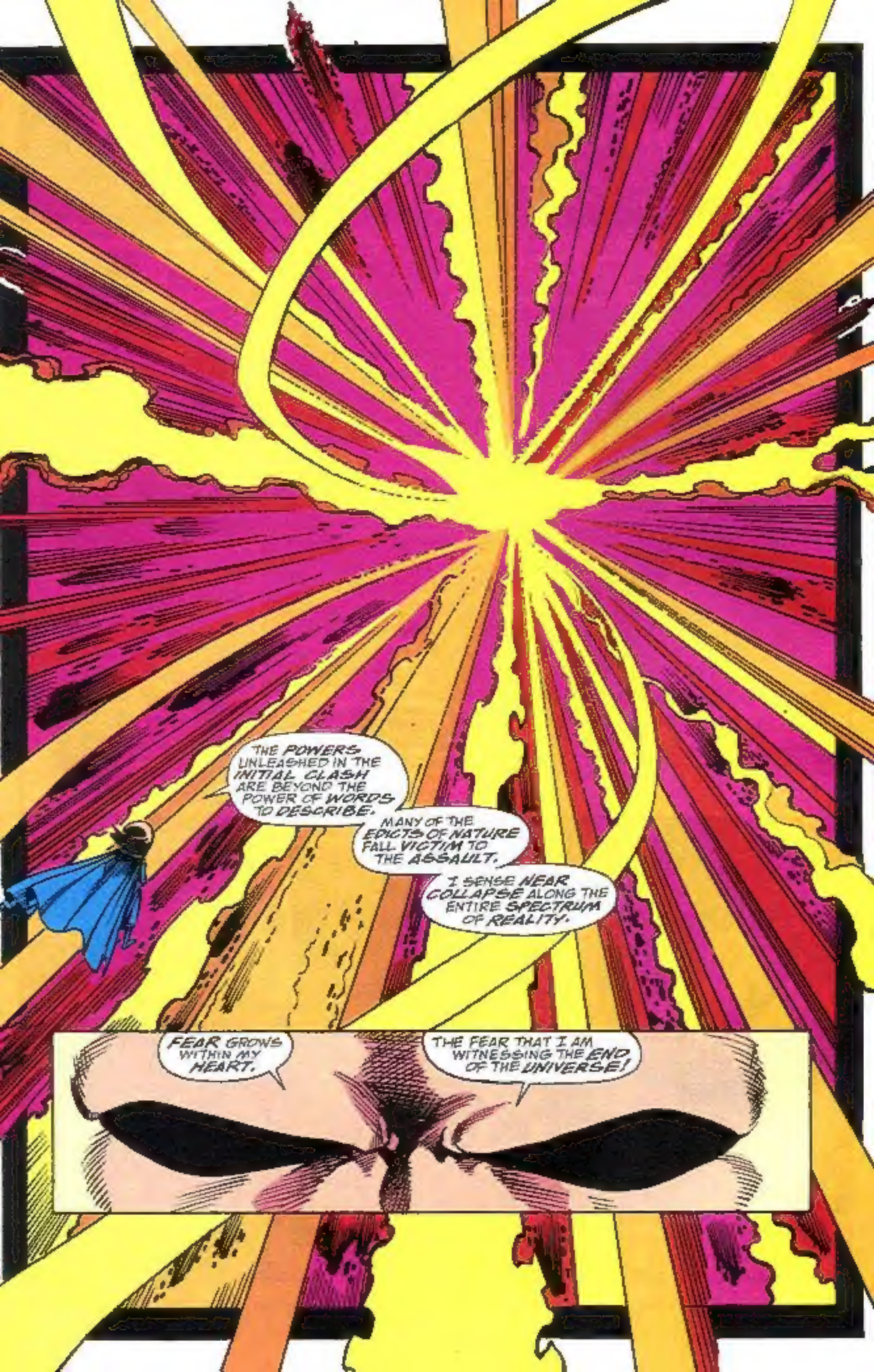
EARTH'S DEFENDERS HAVE FALLEN AND BEEN EXILED TO PARTS UNKNOWN.

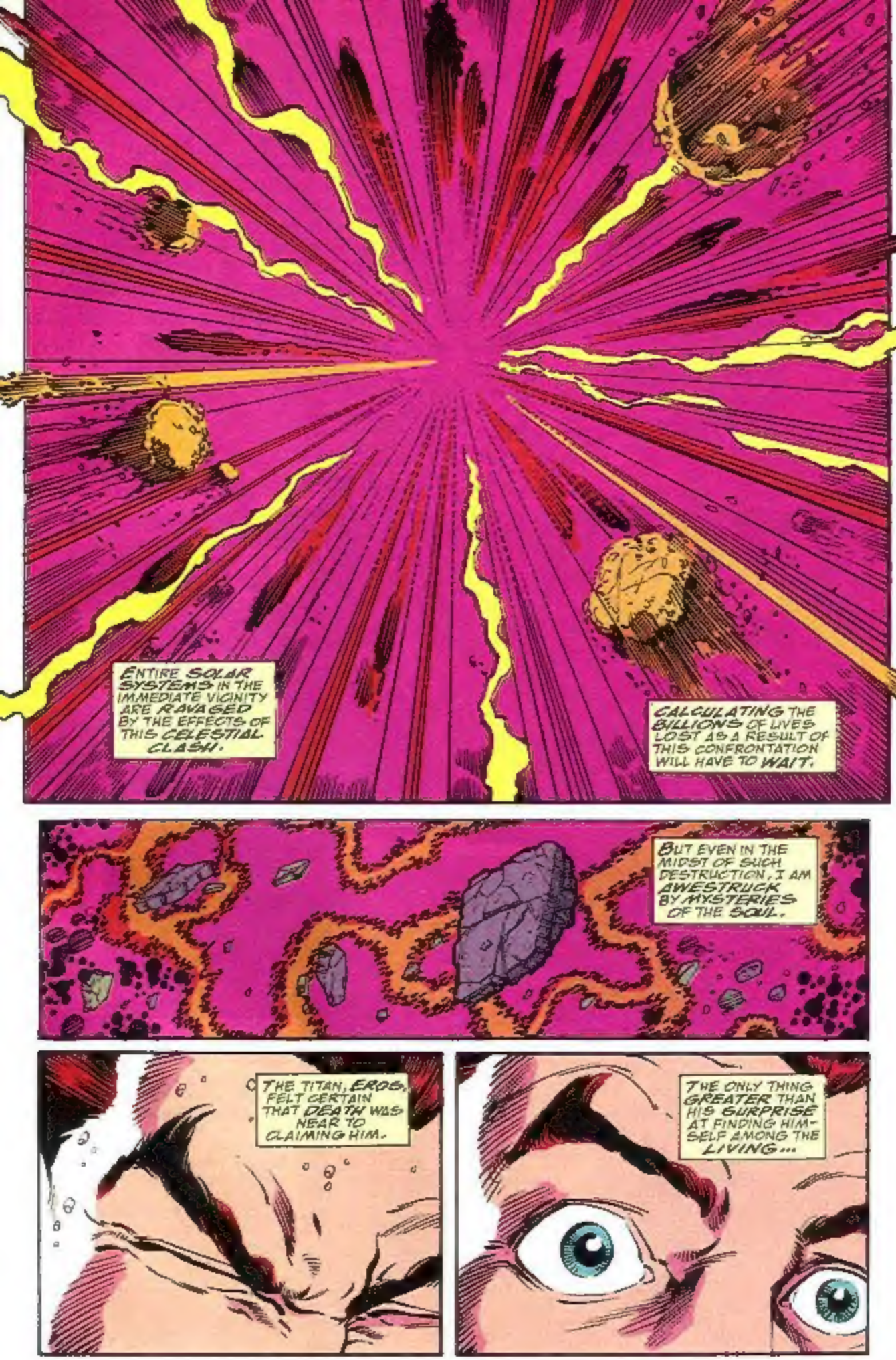
PLEASE USE YOUR MYSTIC POWER, DR. STRANGE, TO LOCATE AS MANY AS YOU CAN, FOR LATER RETRIEVAL.

MEANWHILE, ETERNITY'S COSMIC BRIGADE HAS ENGAGED THANOS.

BY THE HOARY HOSTS OF HOGGOTH!

AN ENGAGEMENT OF THAT MAGNITUDE COULD--


THE POWERS UNLEASHED IN THE INITIAL CLASH ARE BEYOND THE POWER OF WORDS TO DESCRIBE.
MANY OF THE EDICTS OF NATURE FALL VICTIM TO THE ASSAULT.
I SENSE NEAR COLLAPSE ALONG THE ENTIRE SPECTRUM OF REALITY.
FEAR GROWS WITHIN MY HEART.
THE FEAR THAT I AM WITNESSING THE END OF THE UNIVERSE!


ENTIRE SOLAR SYSTEMS IN THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY ARE RAVAGED BY THE EFFECTS OF THIS CELESTIAL CLASH.
CALCULATING THE BILLIONS OF LIVES LOST AS A RESULT OF THIS CONFRONTATION WILL HAVE TO WAIT.
BUT EVEN IN THE MIDST OF SUCH DESTRUCTION, I AM AWESTRUCK BY MYSTERIES OF THE SOUL.
THE TITAN, EROS, FELT CERTAIN THAT DEATH WAS NEAR TO CLAIMING HIM.
THE ONLY THING GREATER THAN HIS SURPRISE AT FINDING HIMSELF AMONG THE LIVING...

...IS DISCOVERING WHO HIS SAVIOR IS!

MISTRESS DEATH!

HER HATRED FOR THANOS MUST REACH UNFATHOMABLE DEPTHS!

I HAD NO IDEA IT WOULD BE SO...

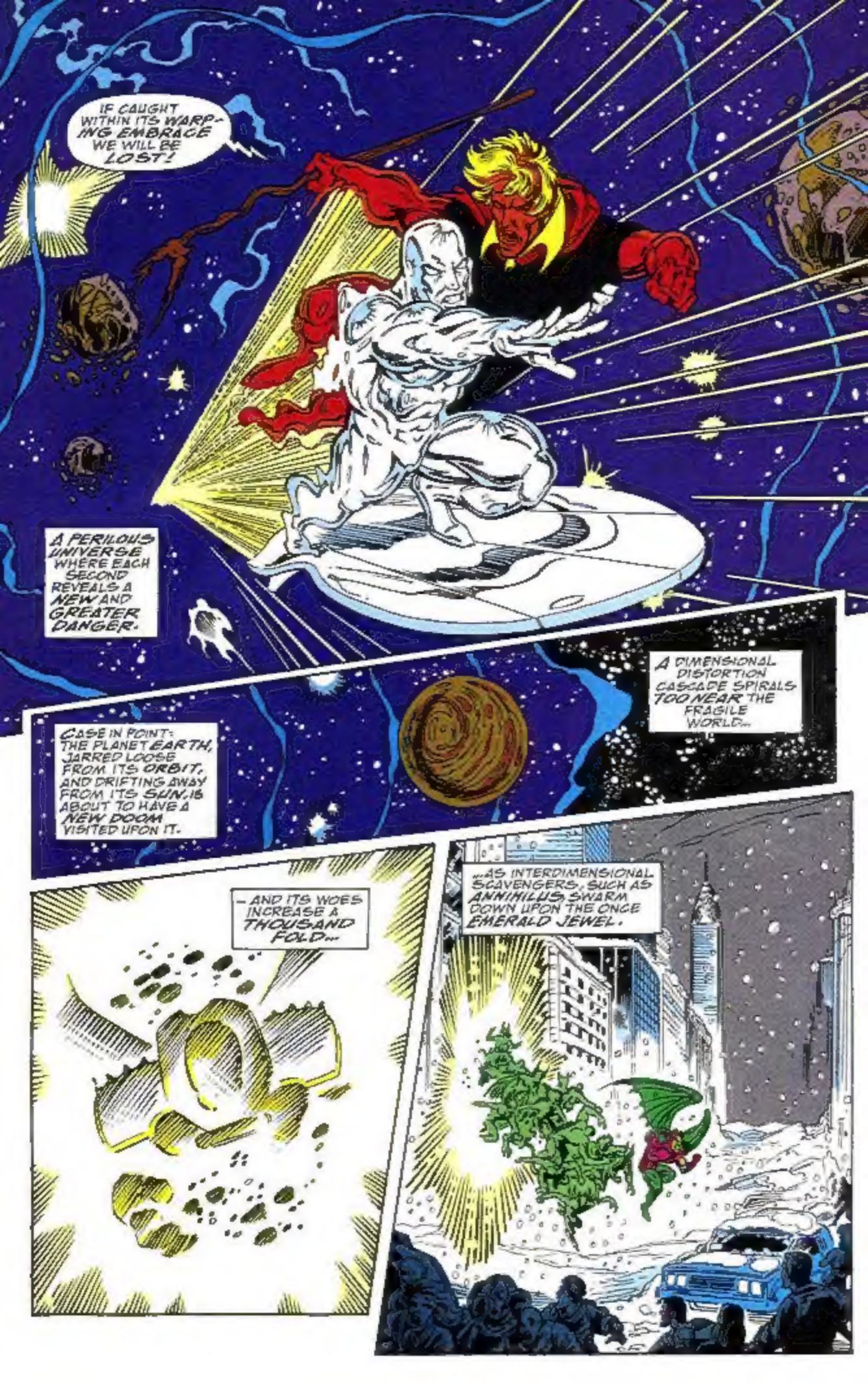
YES... SHEER LUCK WE... SURVIVED...

TOO CLOSE.

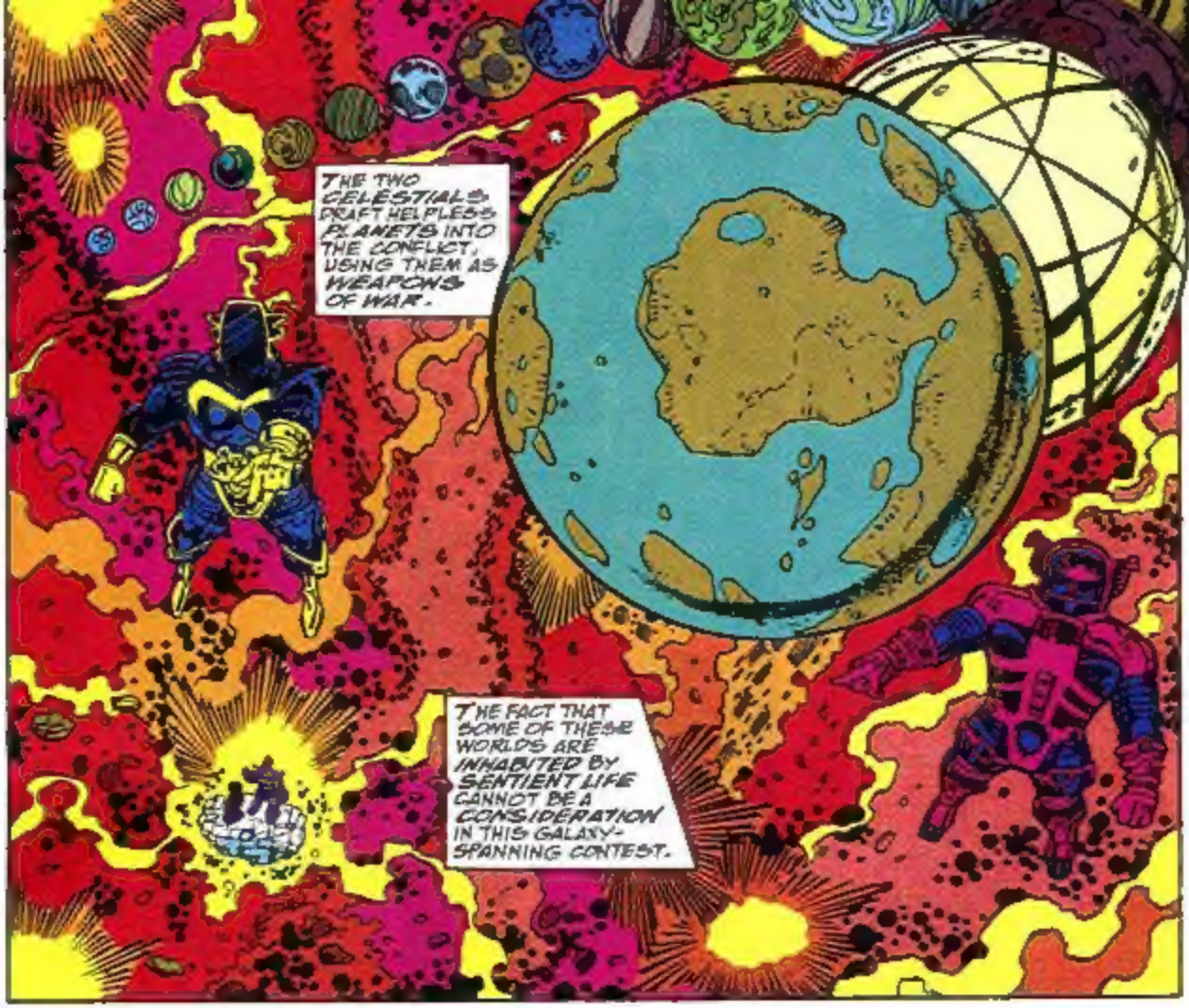
WARLOCK! WHAT IS THAT?!

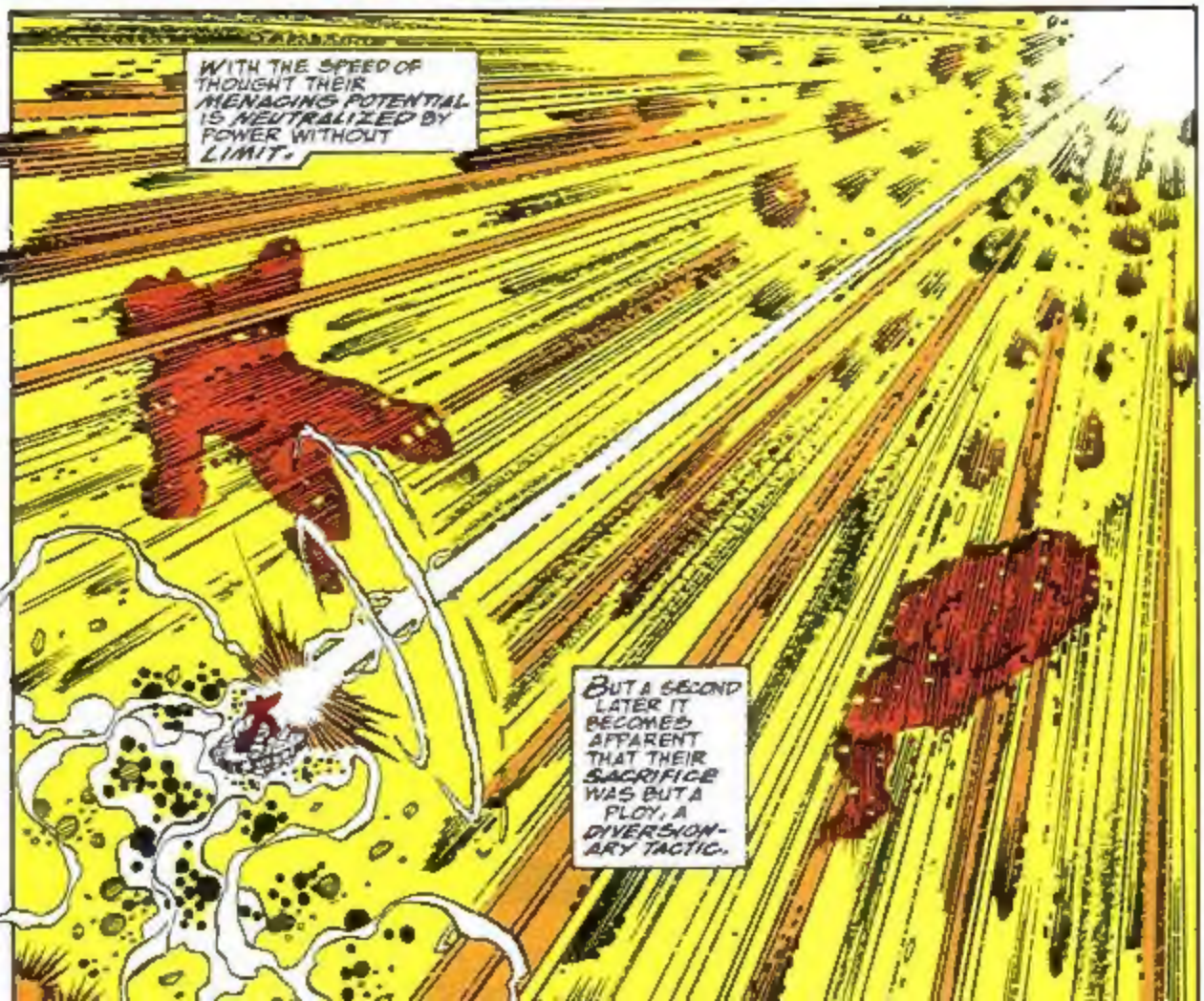
AN INTER-DIMENSIONAL DISTORTION CASCADE!

QUICKLY! WE MUST BE AWAY FROM HERE!

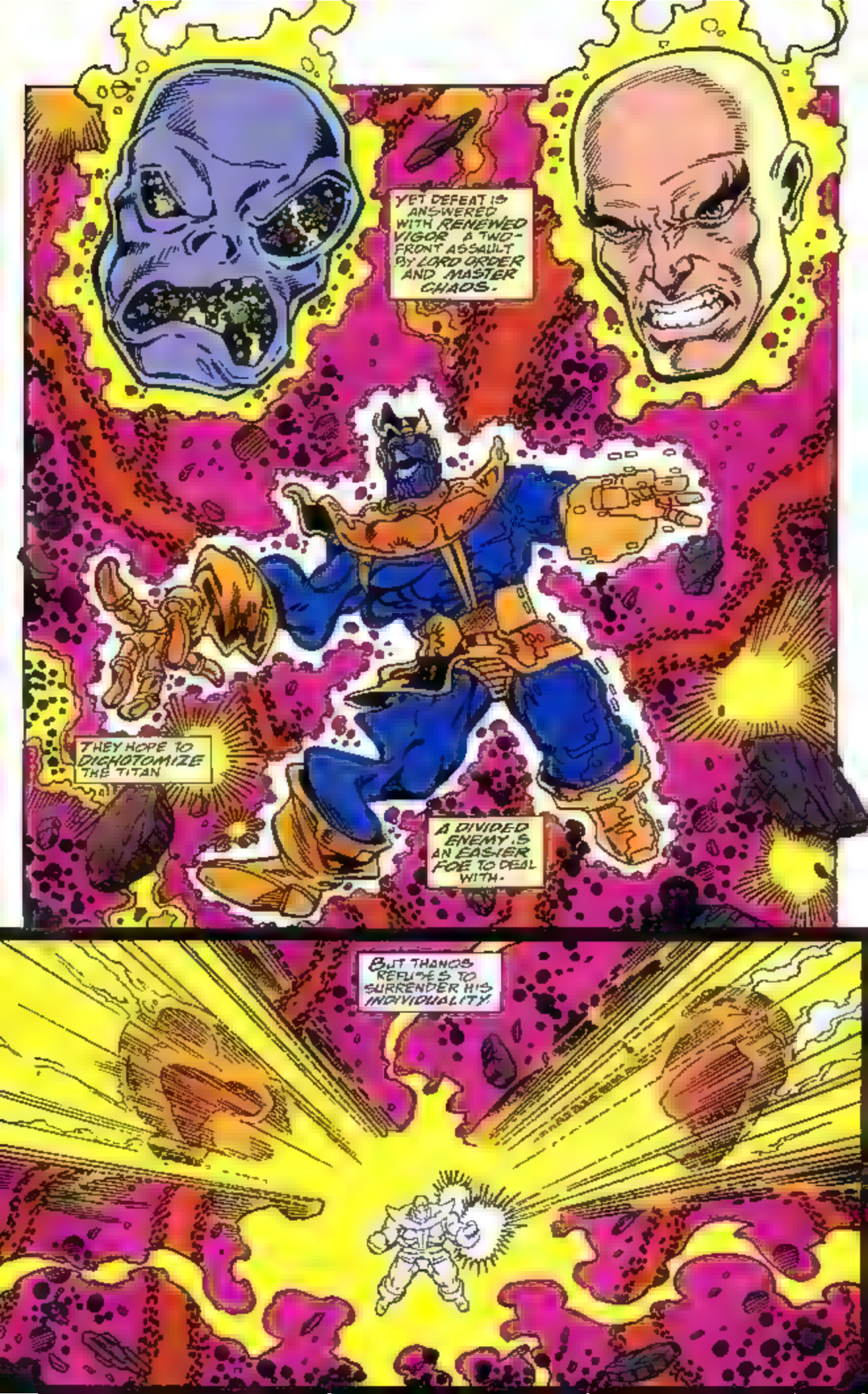

IF CAUGHT WITHIN ITS WARPING EMBRACE WE WILL BE LOST!
A PERILOUS UNIVERSE WHERE EACH SECOND REVEALS A NEW AND GREATER DANGER.
A DIMENSIONAL DISTORTION CASCADE SPIRALS TOO NEAR THE FRAGILE WORLD...
CASE IN POINT: THE PLANET EARTH, JARRED LOOSE FROM ITS ORBIT, AND DRIFTING AWAY FROM ITS SUN, IS ABOUT TO HAVE A NEW DOOM VISITED UPON IT.
...AS INTERDIMENSIONAL SCAVENGERS, SUCH AS ANNIHILUS SWARM DOWN UPON THE ONCE EMERALD JEWEL.
- AND ITS WOES INCREASE A THOUSAND FOLD...

YET SUCH WORRIES SEEM HARDLY WORTH MENTIONING WHEN CONSIDERED IN CONTEXT.
FOR THIS UNIVERSE WAITS A MERE BREATH AWAY FROM ALL-ENCOMPASSING COSMIC DESTRUCTION.
A DOOM BIRTHED AND NURTURED WITHIN THE MAD AMBITIONS OF A BLACK SOUL.
THANOS DEFENDS HIS DIVINITY.
LET THE HEAVENS TREMBLE.


THE TWO CELESTIALS DRAFT HELPLESS PLANETS INTO THE CONFLICT, USING THEM AS WEAPONS OF WAR.
THE FACT THAT SOME OF THESE WORLDS ARE INHABITED BY SENTIENT LIFE CANNOT BE A CONSIDERATION IN THIS GALAXY-SPANNING CONTEST.


WITH THE SPEED OF THOUGHT THEIR MENACING POTENTIAL IS NEUTRALIZED BY POWER WITHOUT LIMIT.
BUT A SECOND LATER IT BECOMES APPARENT THAT THEIR SACRIFICE WAS BUT A PLOY, A DIVERSIONARY TACTIC.

A FUTILE HOPE
INFINITY GEMS ON
MASTERY
OVER-
WHELM
DROWN AN
OCEAN


YET DEFEAT IS ANSWERED WITH RENEWED VIGOR A TWO-FRONT ASSAULT BY LORD ORDER AND MASTER CHAOS.
THEY HOPE TO DICHOTOMIZE THE TITAN
A DIVIDED ENEMY IS AN EASIER FOE TO DEAL WITH.
BUT THANOS REFUSES TO SURRENDER HIS INDIVIDUALITY!

AND THE BATTLE CONTINUES TO RAGE WITHOUT PAUSE.

FORCES COMBINED TO ADD UP TO MORE THAN THE SUM OF THEIR TOTAL.

THE TEMPORAL IS ABANDONED FOR PURE FORCE OF ENERGY.

AND THE SHEER INTENSITY OF GALACTUS, THE STRANGER AND EON'S BLITZKRIEG CATCHES THE MAD TITAN OFF BALANCE.

YET IT IS BUT A MINOR SETBACK FOR THANOS, ONE THAT CAN BE OVERCOME WITH A MERE WISH.

BY THE HEAVENS, WHAT AM I DOING?!?
GIVING THOSE WRETCHES EXACTLY WHAT THEY DESERVE!
BUT THEY ARE MY HEAVENLY BROTHERS...
AND I WILL KILL THEM ALL!
NO, I SHOULD HONOR AND CHERISH THEM!
WHAT MADNESS IS THIS!?!
THIS IS UTTER FOLLY!
THE UNIVERSE IS BEING DESTROYED BY THOSE SEEKING TO DEFEND IT!
SUCH INSANITY CANNOT BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE!
AND HOW WOULD YOU STOP IT?
BY LOVE?

CONFLICTING EMOTIONS... TEARING ME APART..
THIS CAN ONLY BE THE WORK OF...
--MISTRESS LOVE AND SIRE HATE!!
HOW DARE YOU TAMPER WITH ME SO?!
BE AWAY, BOTHERSOME MANIPU-LATORS!
BUT ALSO BEWARE DECEIVERS, TITAN...
HELL'S FIRE, WHAT?!
EXACTLY, MY LIEGE!!
MEPHISTO!
COME TO RELIEVE YOU OF YOUR BURDEN OF SUPREMACY!

A RESPONSIBILITY I AM NOT QUITE READY TO RELINQUISH, TRAITOR!

ACKK!

YOU REVERTED TO TYPE PREMATURELY, DEVIL!

AN ERROR YOU WILL PAY FOR DEARLY!

WHAT?! WHO?

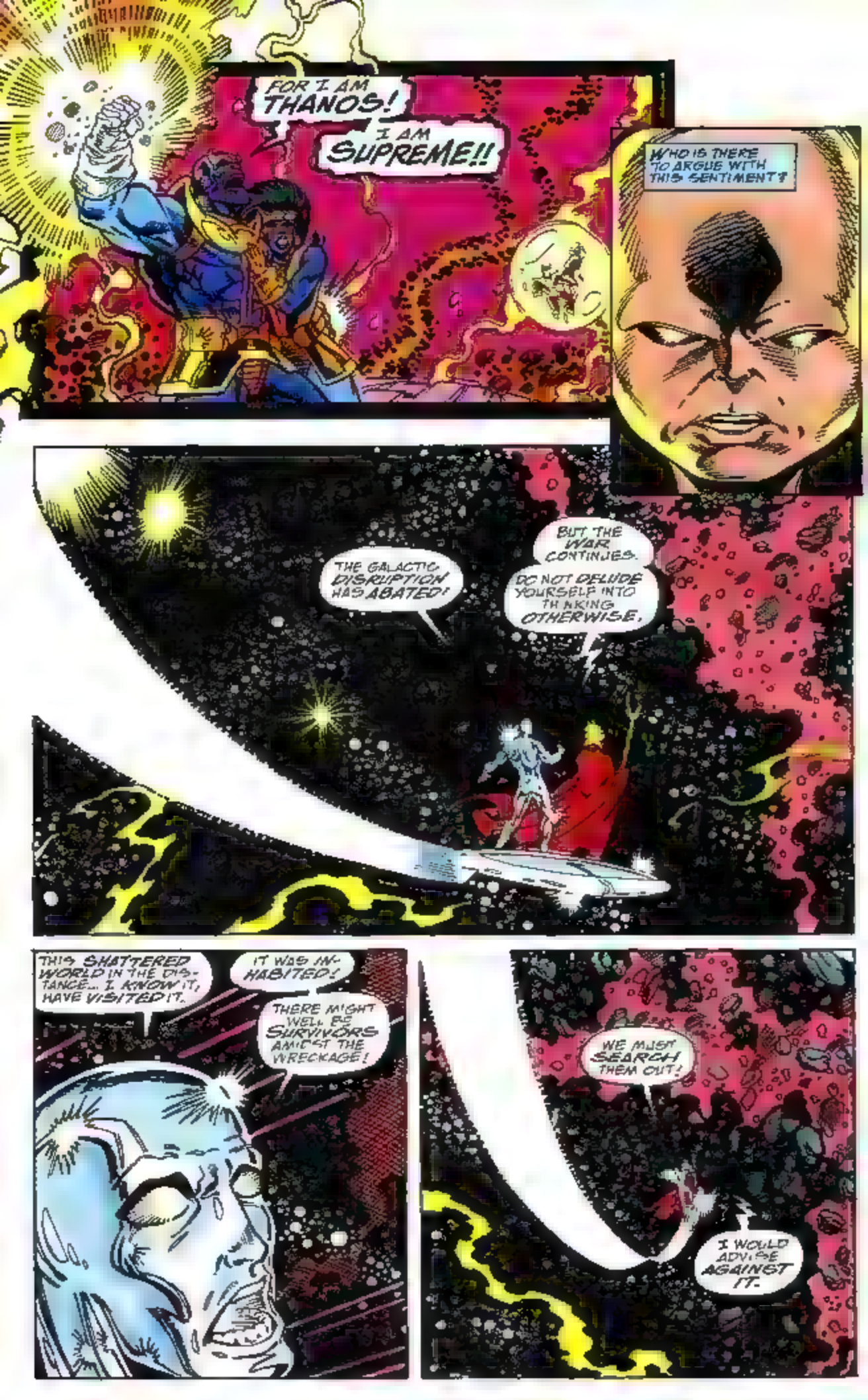
MISTRESS DEATH?

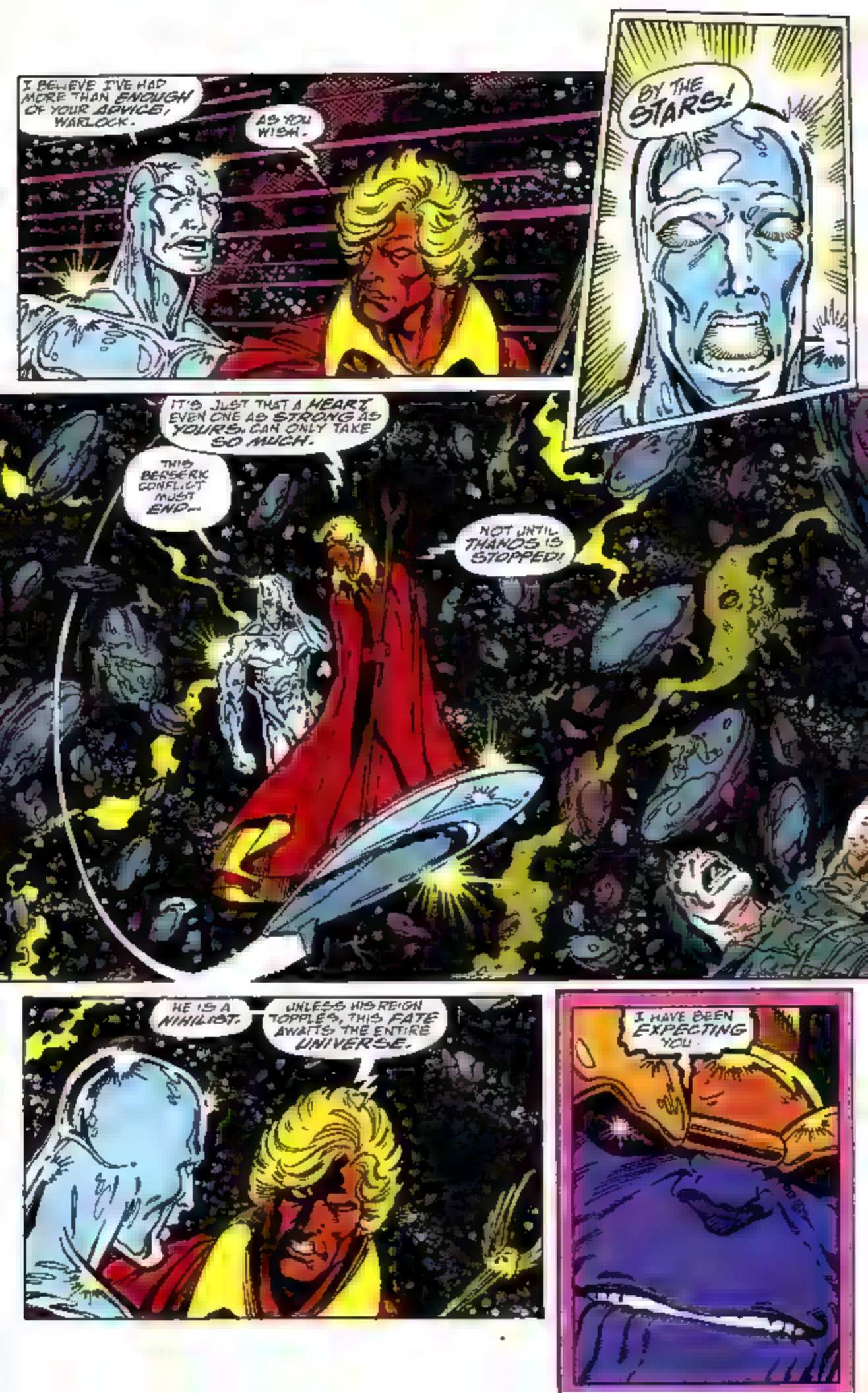
YOU TOO BETRAY ME?

I OFFERED YOU THE UNIVERSE...

NO!

BEST
CLEAR THINKING
CHAOTIC EMOTION
ILLUSIONS.


FOR I AM THANOS!
I AM SUPREME!!
WHO IS THERE TO ARGUE WITH THIS SENTIMENT?
THE GALACTIC DISRUPTION HAS ABATED!
BUT THE WAR CONTINUES.
DO NOT DELUDE YOURSELF INTO THINKING OTHERWISE.
THIS SHATTERED WORLD IN THE DISTANCE... I KNOW IT, HAVE VISITED IT.
IT WAS INHABITED!
THERE MIGHT WELL BE SURVIVORS AMIDST THE WRECKAGE!
WE MUST SEARCH THEM OUT!
I WOULD ADVISE AGAINST IT.


I BELIEVE I'VE HAD MORE THAN ENOUGH OF YOUR ADVICE, WARLOCK.
AS YOU WISH.
BY THE STARS!
IT'S JUST THAT A HEART, EVEN ONE AS STRONG AS YOURS, CAN ONLY TAKE SO MUCH.
THIS BERSERK CONFLICT MUST END...
NOT UNTIL THANOS IS STOPPED!
HE IS A NIHILIST.
UNLESS HIS REIGN TOPPLES, THIS FATE AWAITS THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE.
I HAVE BEEN EXPECTING YOU.

NOW THAT HIS FOOT SOLDIERS HAVE FALLEN.. PROUD ETERNITY AT LAST DEIGNS TO SHOW HIMSELF!!
TO RECLAIM THAT WHICH IS MINE AND MYSELF!
CONTROL OF THIS REALITY!
A PRIZE I FOUGHT HARD TO GAIN AND ONE I SHALL NEVER ABANDON!
THEN LET US SEE WHICH ALMIGHTY BEING TRULY HAS THE TIGHTER GRIP ON THE FABRIC OF WHAT IS!
DEFEND YOURSELF, TITAN!

SURELY, THIS MUST BE THE END!

NO THE OUTCOME OF YONDER COSMIC BATTLE IS ALREADY DECIDED.

HOW CAN YOU KNOW THIS?

I AM LINKED TO THE INFINITY GEMS IN WAYS EVEN I DO NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND.

THE MASTERY OF ALL ACTUALITY IS NOW FIRMLY IN THE GRASP OF ONE INDIVIDUAL.

THANOS OR ETERNITY?! WHO PREVAILED?

ONE WHO ONLY LOSES WHEN HIS SUBCONCIOUS DESIRES BETRAY HIM.

YOU MEAN...

I DO.

AND IN THAT SLIM HOPE DOES SURVIVAL LAY.

MERE RIDDLES, WARLOCK?

IS SPEAKING PLAINLY BEYOND YOUR ABILITY?!

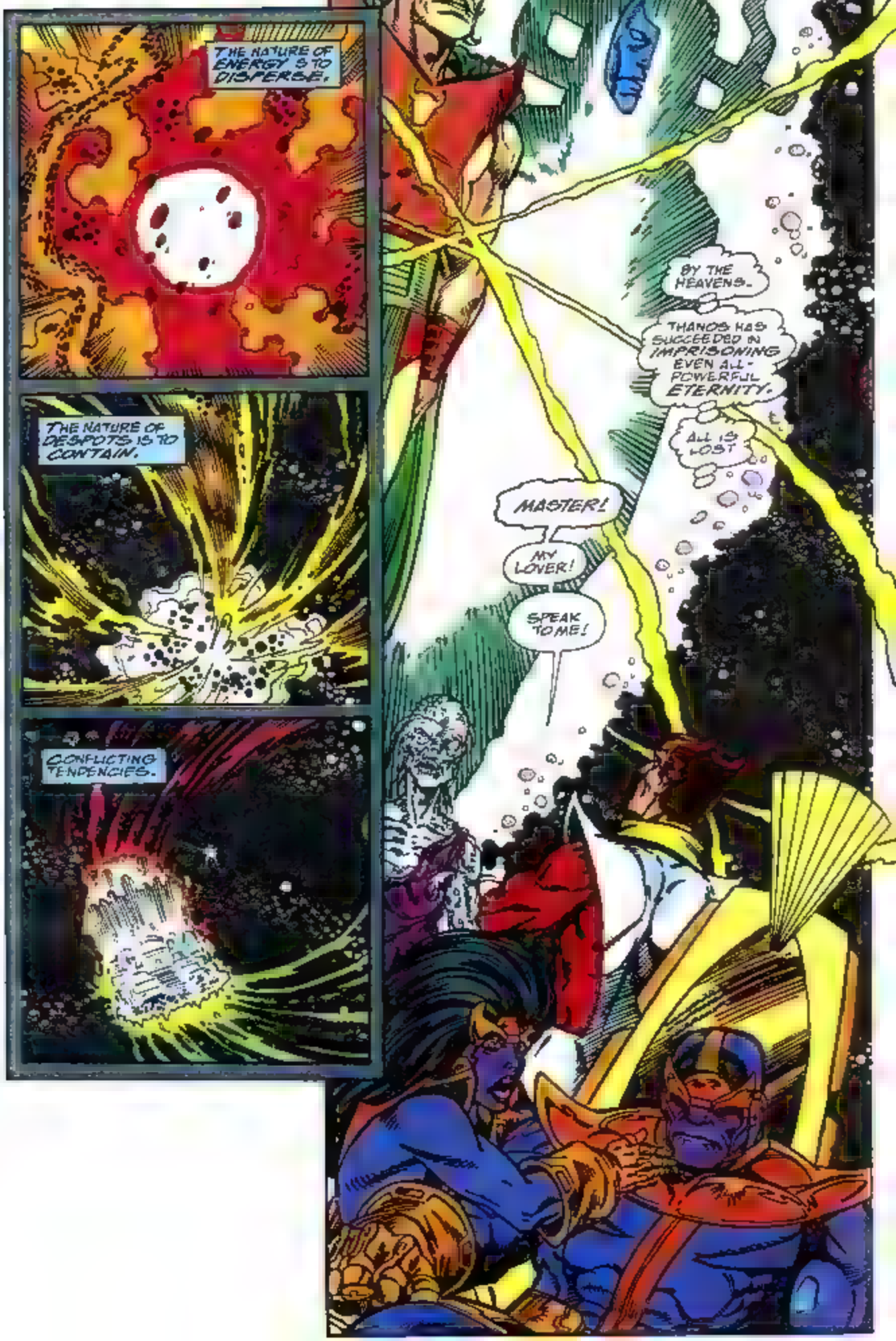
PERHAPS

DR STRANGE, RETRIEVAL IS IN ORDER!

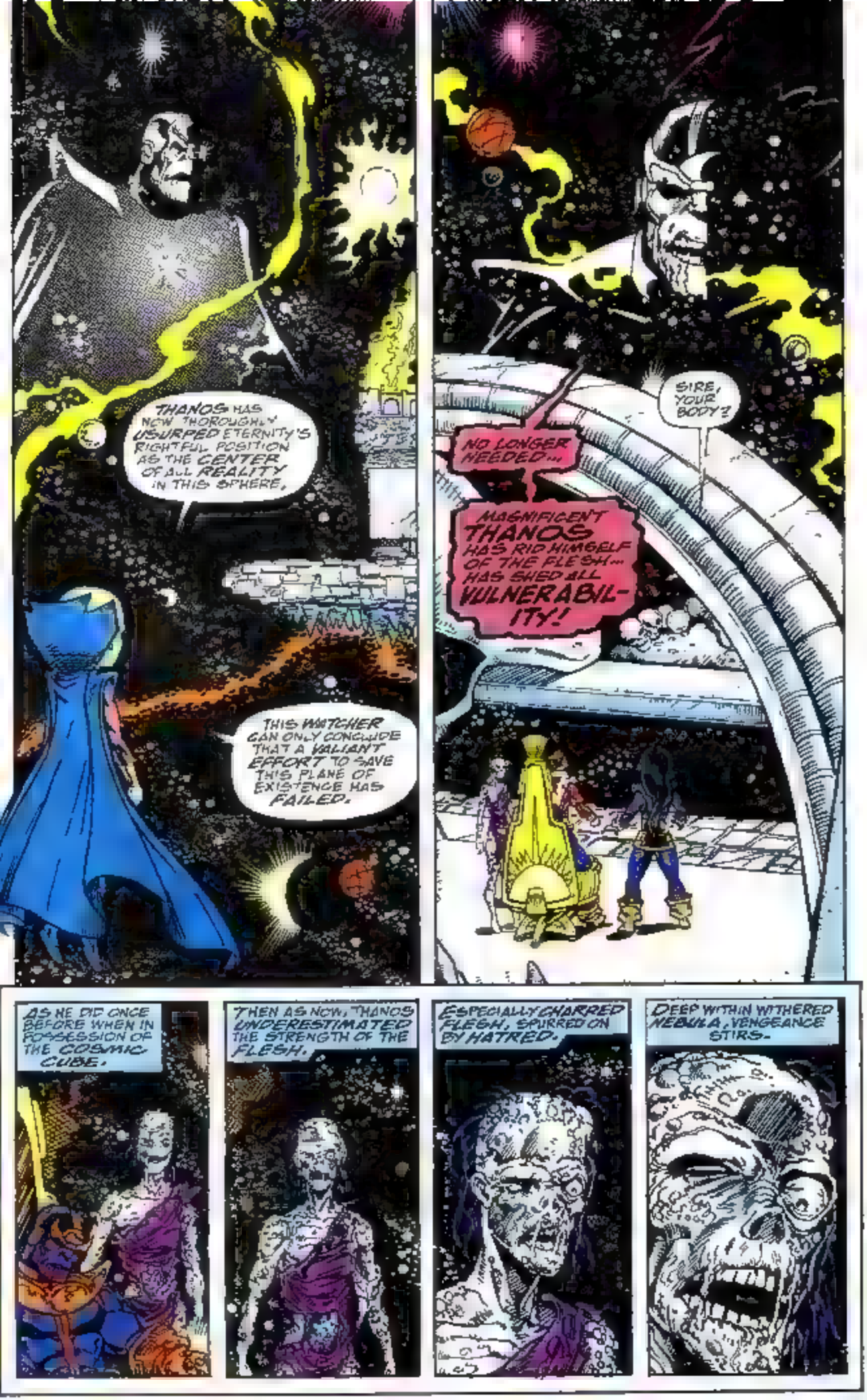
HOW GOES THE STRUGGLE?

POORLY.

HORRENDOUSLY


THE NATURE OF ENERGY IS TO DISPERSE.
THE NATURE OF DESPOTS IS TO CONTAIN.
CONFLICTING TENDENCIES.
BY THE HEAVENS.
THANOS HAS SUCCEEDED IN IMPRISONING EVEN ALL-POWERFUL ETERNITY.
ALL IS LOST
MASTER!
MY LOVER!
SPEAK TO ME!

WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE ME SAY, DEAR TERRAXIA?


THANOS HAS NOW THOROUGHLY USURPED ETERNITY'S RIGHTFUL POSITION AS THE CENTER OF ALL REALITY IN THIS SPHERE.
THIS WATCHER CAN ONLY CONCLUDE THAT A VALIANT EFFORT TO SAVE THIS PLANE OF EXISTENCE HAS FAILED.
SIRE, YOUR BODY?
NO LONGER NEEDED...
MAGNIFICENT THANOS HAS RID HIMSELF OF THE FLESH... HAS SHED ALL VULNERABILITY!
AS HE DID ONCE BEFORE WHEN IN POSSESSION OF THE COSMIC CUBE.
THEN AS NOW, THANOS UNDERESTIMATED THE STRENGTH OF THE FLESH.
ESPECIALLY CHARRED FLESH, SPURRED ON BY HATRED.
DEEP WITHIN WITHERED NEBULA, VENGEANCE STIRS.

NO!

AND A REVERSAL OF CORE FORTUNES
NEBULA
KEEPS AWAY FROM THE EDGE OF OBLIVION!!
THE MANTLE OF PROVIDENCE RESTS NOW ON NEW SHOULDERS
MY EVERY WISH IS BUT AN URGE AWAY!
AND YOU KNOW WHAT I YEARN FOR DEAR THANOS?
REVENGE!
MASTER

THE REINS OF POWER HAVE CHANGED HANDS.

HOW?!

OUR SITUATION HAS GONE FROM BAD TO WORSE!

THE NEWLY-CHRISTENED ALL-MIGHTY IS DERANGED FROM MONTHS OF PAIN AND ANGUISH.

STRANGE, I HAVE NEED OF YOUR MYSTIC TALENTS.

I RAPPED,

AND ALONE

FOR I HAD NOT THE FORESIGHT TO CREATE TERRAXIA CAPABLE OF SURVIVING DEEP SPACE WITHOUT THE AID OF MY NOW-FORFEITED GODLY POWERS.

I SHALL MISS HER

BUT SURVIVAL BE NOT A TREASURED PRIZE.

THIS BODY SHALL ENDURE LONG AFTER MY SPIRIT SUCCUMBS TO THIS EXILE NEBULA HAS BANISHED ME TO.

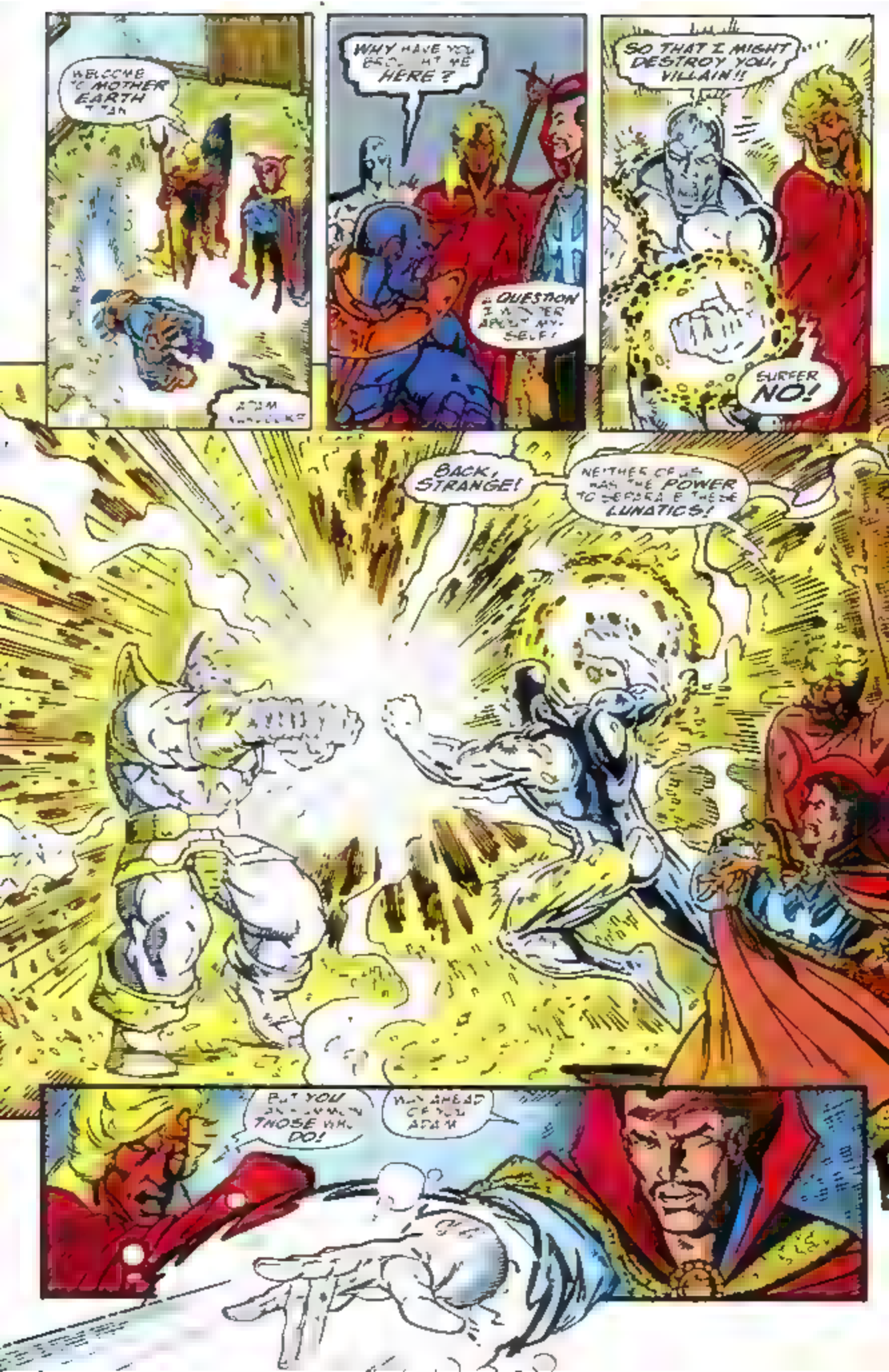
AN ETERNITY OF DRIFTING HELPLESSLY IN SPACE.

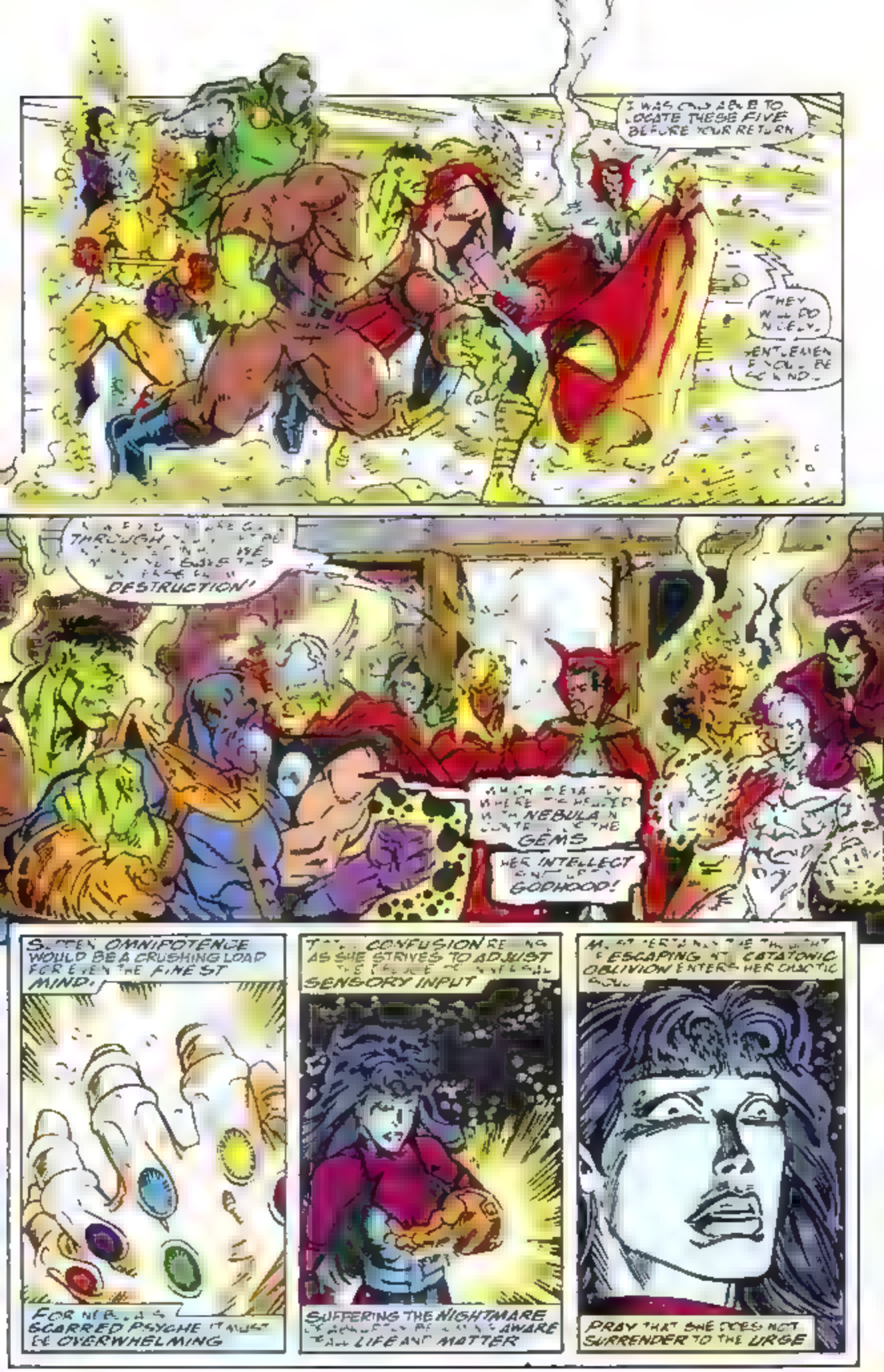
AN INFINITY TO MULL ON MY SINS AND FOLLIES.

WHAT?

A MYSTIC PORTAL.

WHO?


WELCOME TO MOTHER EARTH TITAN
WHY HAVE YOU BROUGHT ME HERE?
A QUESTION I WONDER ABOUT MYSELF!
SO THAT I MIGHT DESTROY YOU, VILLAIN!!
SURFER NO!
BACK, STRANGE!
NEITHER OF US HAS THE POWER TO SEPARATE THESE LUNATICS!
BUT YOU ARE SUMMON THOSE WHO DO!
WAY AHEAD OF YOU ADAM


I WAS ONLY ABLE TO LOCATE THESE FIVE BEFORE YOUR RETURN
THEY WILL DO NICELY.
GENTLEMEN IF YOU'LL BE SO KIND...
THROUGH
DESTRUCTION!
NEBULA
GEMS
HER INTELLECT
GODHOOD!
OMNIPOTENCE WOULD BE A CRUSHING LOAD FOR EVEN THE FINEST MIND.
FOR
SCARRED PSYCHE IT MUST BE OVERWHELMING
CONFUSION
AS SHE STRIVES TO ADJUST
SENSORY INPUT
SUFFERING THE NIGHTMARE
AWARE
LIFE AND MATTER
ESCAPING
CATATONIC OBLIVION ENTERS HER CHAOTIC
PRAY THAT SHE DOES NOT SURRENDER TO THE URGE

I RAN ENTIRE REALITY WILL JOIN HER IN THAT DARK JOURNEY

...HAS BEEN WORKING WITH MY DESIGNS

...THE PLAN CHANGES OF COURSE

BUT I HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE

NICE ONE X

ALONE WITH THANOS IS NEEDED BEFORE WE CAN PROCEED.

SCHEME UP SOME NEW DEVILTRY AND DECEIT

...THANOS'S SECRET PARTNER!

...THE DOOR, SEAM

YOU WILL REGRET NOT HELPING ME ARES ME

THEY USED TO CALL HER DESTROYER

WELL COMRADE WHAT NOW?

...TRAINT...

YOU KNOW WE NEED YOUR HELP TO OVER-COME NEBULA.
AND WHAT IF I WITHHOLD THIS AID.?
WHAT BENEFIT DO I REAP FROM NEBULA'S DEFEAT?
THE TRUTH?
WHAT TRUTH?
ABOUT YOUR-SELF.
YOU HAVE SOME SPECIAL INSIGHT INTO THIS MATTER?
YES.
I WAS PART OF THE SOUL GEM WHILE YOU POSSESSED IT.
WHICH PERMITTED ME ACCESS TO YOUR INNER HEART.
I KNOW YOU AS NO OTHER BEING IN THE UNIVERSE DOES.
BETTER THAN EVEN YOU DO YOURSELF!

LOOK BACK ONTO YOUR LIFE

WHY?

SOUL

THREE TIMES

SUPPLIED THE MEANS TO YOUR OWN DEFEAT

ALLOWED
COSMIC

NO IT WAS A MISTAKE

BUT AFTERWARDS...

NO PROMISES.

THEY HAVEN'T ONE CHANCE IN A MILLION FOR VICTORY.

THEY ARE WELL AWARE OF THAT FACT.

NONE EXPECTED.

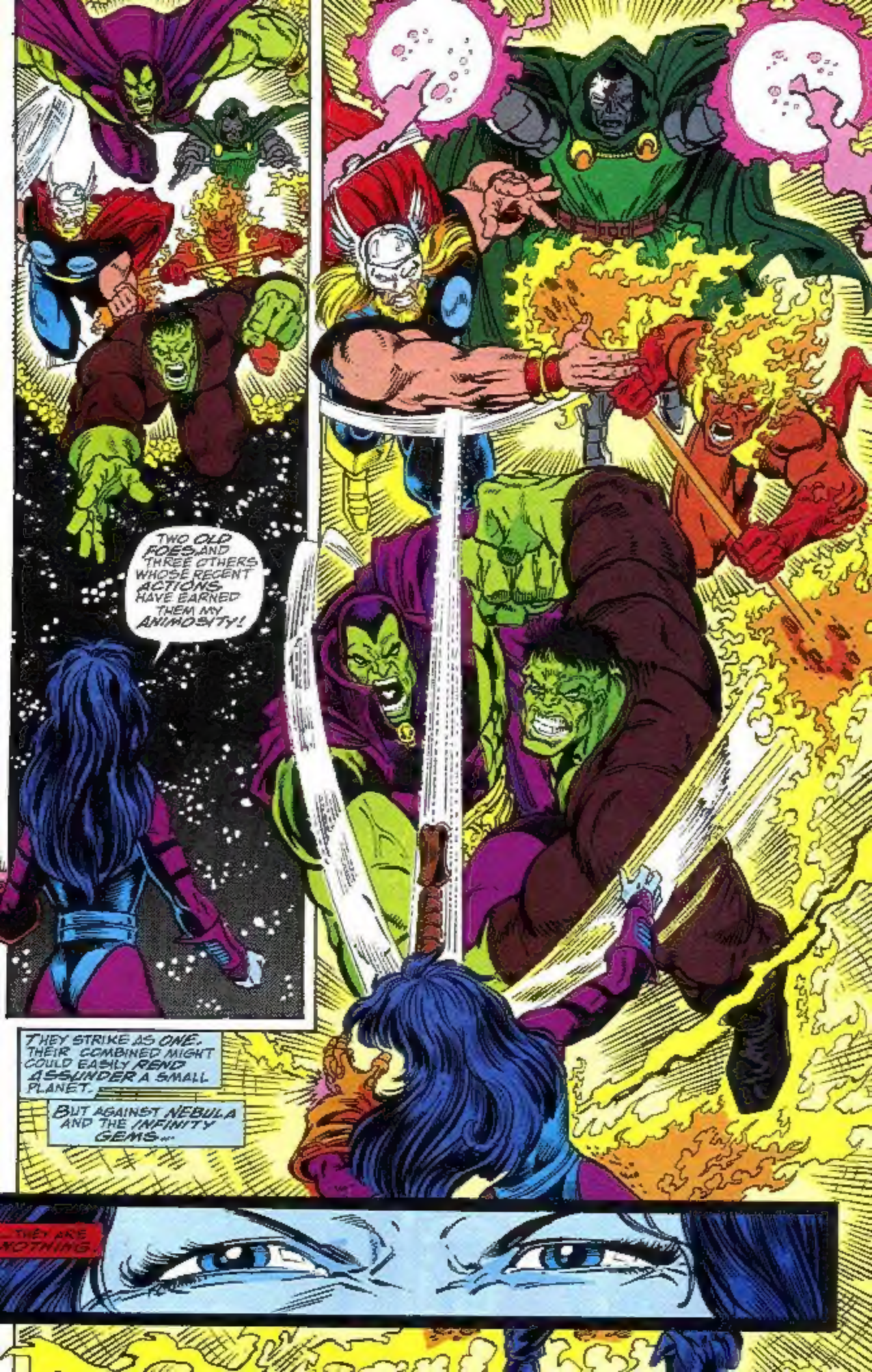
STRANGE, IS ALL IN READINESS?

EVERYONE IS SET TO GO.

WE SHALL GIVE YOUR ALL.

BUT WE DO.

I BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND THANOS'S HUNGER FOR THIS INFINITE MIGHT.
TOMORROW IS MINE TO SCULPT TO MY FANCY.
THE UNIVERSE IS CLAY WAITING TO BE MOLDED.
NEVER AGAIN WILL I BE VICTIMIZED OR SURPRISED; FOR I HAVE SEEN MY EVERY WAKING MOMENT STRETCHING OFF INTO FOREVER!
IN FACT, A MOST SATISFYING INSTANT IS ALMOST UPON US.
ALREADY THE MIST BEGINS TO PART.
THE FUTURE CLEARS FOR ME.
AND SO DOES MY DESTINY.
IN EXACTLY FIVE SECONDS FROM NOW I WILL BE RECEIVING VISITORS.


TWO OLD FOES, AND THREE OTHERS WHOSE RECENT ACTIONS HAVE EARNED THEM MY ANIMOSITY!
THEY STRIKE AS ONE. THEIR COMBINED MIGHT COULD EASILY REND ASSUNDER A SMALL PLANET.
BUT AGAINST NEBULA AND THE INFINITY GEMS...
...THEY ARE NOTHING.

MERELY A MOMENTARY DIVERSION.
THEY ARE BUT CHILDREN SENT TO PESTER.
A MEANS TO ATTRACT MY ATTENTION.
THE ARCHITECTS OF THIS FRUITLESS ASSAULT ARE NOW NOTICED AND TRACKED DOWN BY MY COSMIC SENSES.
YOU'LL FIND THIS INTERESTING, EROS.
THERE ARE THREE WHO SEEK TO CHALLENGE MY MIGHT.
AND ONE OF THEM IS...

...YOUR BROTHER, THANOS!!
COME TO RECLAIM MY RIGHTFUL PROPERTY, WENCH.
WITH THE HELP OF YOUR TWO LITTLE FRIENDS?
YOU DIS-APPOINT ME, THANOS!
I THOUGHT YOU'D MAKE YOUR LAST STAND ARMED WITH MORE THAN JUST EMPTY BRAVADO.
TWO LITTLE FRIENDS...?
NEXT THE FINAL CONFRONTATION